

# **AGING AND DISABILITY COMMISSION**

Tuesday, February 17, 2004

## **MINUTES**

Vice Chairman Charlotte Steptoe, in the Blue Room at Eno Memorial Hall, 754 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, Connecticut, called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

**Present:** Charolette Steptoe, Gloria Knierim, Lynn Veith, Eileen Umpleby, Ed LaMontagne, Grace Comeau, Ricki Berquist (staff consultant), John Romano (Board of Selectman liason)

**Not Present:** Peg Bergethon, Moira Wertheimer, Kathy Fallon, Arline Bidwell (excused)

**Public Audience:** None present

**Minutes of the Previous Meeting:** Minutes of the January 20<sup>th</sup> meeting were amended to reflect that Eileen Umpleby was not present. Upon motion by Lynn Veith and seconded by Grace Comeau, the minutes were accepted as amended.

## **REPORTS: SUB-COMMITTEES/PROJECTS**

### **Disability:**

Ed LaMontagne distributed an article from the February 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the Hartford Courant entitled, "Officials Address Housing Conflict". The article discussed how housing for the elderly is increasingly being used by younger disabled residents. A recent survey showed that the percentage of elderly housing units occupied by younger disabled residents increased from 14% in 1998 to 22% in 2003. Two state legislators are considering four bills that could alleviate the problem.

Ed also stated that The ARC and the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Aging with Developmental Disabilities has published a handbook entitled, "A Family Handbook on Future Planning". The handbook is a guide to help families develop a future plan for their sons and daughters with cognitive, intellectual or developmental disabilities that provides personal, financial and legal protections for these individuals after their parents either die or can no longer provide care or support.

Ed mentioned that this is the time of year when we began mailing nominations for the Ability Awareness Award. Gloria Knierim stated that we should consider giving an award to someone who has contributed to, and enhanced the life of, an elderly person because we are the Aging and Disability Commission. It was further discussed that we could alternate each year between aging and disabilities. It was decided that Commission members would consider different options for this award for discussion at the March meeting.

### **Legislative:**

Federal – No report given

State- Ed LaMontagne stated that the Governor has added funds in his FY 05 budget to reduce the number of individuals on the Waiting List. According to the budget 750 individuals would be removed from the list over a period of five years with 150 to be removed during FY 05. In addition monies have been allocated for 2004 school

graduates to receive services through DMR. Both proposals need to be approved by the State Legislature.

Lynn Veith stated that the Committee on Aging will be hearing several bills in the next week, specifically on February 10<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford. There are presently six senate bills and three house bills which relate to the aged population. There will also be a hearing, tentatively scheduled for February 19<sup>th</sup>, regarding legislation aimed at reducing the number of younger disabled people living in state housing authority elderly complexes.

**Housing:**

Gloria Knierim discussed an article, which was located in the New York Times entitled, "Eviction Threat Can Loom for Independent Elderly".

**Souper Tuesday:**

It was reported that the next Souper Tuesday would be held on February 24<sup>th</sup> at 12:30. Congresswoman Nancy Johnson may attend. Members from the Lions Club will volunteer their services for this event. The Governors House will provide dessert.

**Ways and Means:**

Grace Comeau reported that Peg Bergethon sent out four solicitation letters for funds. One was sent to the Trinity Episcopal Church, one to Stop and Shop and one to the Simsbury Bank. The destination of the fourth letter was unknown.

It was also reported that the Civitan Club has sent a check for \$400.00 for Souper Tuesday.

**Senior Center:**

Ricki Berquist, Senior Center Director, reported that a Housing Fair will be held at Eno Memorial Hall on April 26<sup>th</sup> from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Speakers will also be present to provide relevant information. Invitations have been sent to thirty housing organizations in the valley.

Ricki also reported that the new slogan for the Senior Center is, "An active place to retire".

No other reports were provided.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Music For All Ages:**

Eileen Umpleby reported that the Simsbury High School Band is unable to participate. Dave Raposo, Director of the Community Band cannot direct the band due to other commitments. Therefore, it does not appear that the event will happen. The \$100.00 for the event, which was voted on at the January 20<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting, was negated. The event will be attempted again next year.

**Other:**

Discussion regarding the Picnic in the Park event was tabled until the March meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Election of Officers:**

The Nominating Committee, comprising of Gloria Knierim, Lynn Vieth and Ed LaMontagne, met at 6:45 p.m. this evening. Lynn will be contacting the recommended nominees to determine if they are interested in serving as officers. Peg Bergethon stated that she would like to stay on

as Chairman until June. Because Peg was not in attendance at this meeting, Lynn will contact her to confirm her intention.

**Commission Membership:**

Discussion was held regarding the "make-up" of the Aging and Disability Commission. The Commission should consist of 12 members and 4 alternates. The Commission is currently made up of 9 members and 1 alternate.

**Correspondence:**

There was no correspondence to be read.

**Other**

Eileen Umpleby asked what the status was for transportation to bring elderly and disabled individuals to medical appointments. This issue was discussed at the Aging and Disability Commission meeting in October at the McLain Hospital. At that time Mickey Lecours-Beck, Director of Social Services, stated that the Dial-a-Ride program has undergone reduced funding. She is attempting to utilize volunteers for transporting to medical appointments but this system is unreliable. Ricki will follow-up with Mickey to secure additional information.

John Romano, Board of Selectman liaison, stated that the town is in a current budget cycle. This will be a difficult year, however the Social Services Department, which includes the Senior Center, will not be contested. The Board of Selectman rejected the most recent budget, which was sent back to department heads for reduction. John will keep the Commission apprised of the status of the budget.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 16, 2004 at 7:00 p.m. in the Blue Room at Eno Memorial Hall.

Lynn Veith made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Gloria Knierim. The meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Edward J. LaMontagne

